

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /008 W

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R 250440Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2008

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: COUNTERING HANOI'S DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE GVN

REFS : A) SAIGON 2338; B) STATE 036412

PERSONAL FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY STEARNS, EA,  
FROM AMBASSADOR

1. PERHAPS WE JUST LOOK AT VIET-NAM WITH A DIFFERENT DEGREE OF SERIOUSNESS, COMPOUNDED BY THE WEARY HOURS ALL OF US HERE PUT IN TRYING TO COMPENSATE FOR THE ENORMOUS DAMAGE DONE BY THE EA/VN EXERCISE IN "CREDIBILITY" ON THE LETTER TO THE HILL ON THE "BETWEEN 500 AND 1000 POLITICAL PRISONERS" - AN EXERCISE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH US.

2. I HAVE, SUBSEQUENT TO DISPATCH OF REF A, SEEN THE AIRGRAM. I AGREE COMPLETELY THAT IT IS A GOOD MESSAGE. DICK ROSENBERG DESERVES PRAISE FOR THE ADDITION OF THE LAST PARAGRAPH WHICH IS EXCELLENT. I COULD EVEN AGREE WITH THE SOPHISTICATED RATIONALE IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF REF B THAT THE EFFECT OF THE AIRGRAM IS NOT CHANGED BY THE USE OF "LESS THAN ONE PERCENT", "THREE PERCENT" OR "FIVE PERCENT".

3. BUT WHAT IS FRIGHTENING IS NOT ONLY THE LACK OF PERCEPTION THAT THE CHANGE OCCURRED FOR PRECISELY THE SAME PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH THAT BROUGHT THE DISASTROUS "BETWEEN 500 AND 1000 POLITICAL PRISONERS" LETTER - THIS PASSION FOR CREDIBILITY WITH YOUR CRITICS - BUT ALSO THAT, ONCE AGAIN, IT WAS DONE  
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WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH US WHICH REALLY ISN'T ALL

THAT DIFFICULT.

4. MY MESSAGE RECOGNIZED YOUR RIGHT TO SEND OUT WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE. IT TOTALLY DENIED THE RIGHT FOR YOU TO SEND OUT ANYTHING ATTRIBUTED TO THIS EMBASSY WHICH HAS BEEN ALTERED IN ANY WAY WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH AND CONCURRENCE FROM US. THIS ELEMENTAL POINT, WHICH WAS THE SOLE PURPOSE OF MY MESSAGE, WAS TOTALLY IGNORED IN YOUR REPLY. CONSEQUENTLY, I AM NOT VERY MUCH IMPRESSED BY YOUR COMMENT "EA/VN IS WORKING HARD AND EFFECTIVELY TO SUPPORT YOU ON EVERYTHING FROM FUNDING LEVELS TO THE LAWS OF WAR. THIS WAS A REPROACH THE BUREAU DID NOT MERIT." ON THE LAWS OF WAR, I AGREE EA/VN IS DOING AN EFFECTIVE JOB BACKSTOPPING GOERGE ALDRICH. BUT COULDN'T WE HAVE ANTICIPATED THIS AND STARTED MUCH SOONER? UNTIL EA/VN AND YOU DISPLAY SOME WILLINGNESS TO EXPOSE YOURSELF TO THE CRITICISMS THAT WILL FLOW FROM ONE AGGRESSIVELY COMBATTING THE FLOOD OF GROSS PROPAGANDA DISTORTIONS NOW BEING CIRCULATED ON THE HILL, NOTHING YOU ARE DOING ON FUNDING LEVELS IS GOING TO ACCOMPLISH VERY MUCH. I WILL BE INTERESTED TO SEE WHAT USE YOU MAKE OF THE COPIES OF THE LETTER TO CONGRESSMAN NIX WHICH I HAVE ASKED JOHN ROBINSON TO DELIVER TO YOU ON HIS ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEK. THE MEMCON OF THE MEETING WITH THE WEBBER-RANSON-KELLY-BOONE GROUP OF PEACE ACTIVISTS MAY PROVE USEFUL IN COMBATTING THE PUBLICITY THEY RECEIVED ON THEIR RETURN. EA/VN, ALTHOUGH INFORMED OF THEIR TRIP, DID NOT EVEN BOTHER TO ALERT US UNTIL THEY RECEIVED MORE "HARD INTELLIGENCE" BY WHICH TIME THE GROUP HAD ALREADY COME AND GONE.

5. THIS MEMCON AND THE REPLY TO THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LETTER WILL, QUITE OBVIOUSLY, TURN LOOSE ON ME THE FULL MIGHT OF THE PROPAGANDA MACHINE OF THE OTHER SIDE. I ACCEPT THIS AS INEVITABLE, BUT THIS JOB OF COUNTER-ATTACK ON THE PROPAGANDA IS ONE WHICH EA/VN AND YOU SHOULD BE LEADING AND DIRECTING - NOT ME. BUT, IF NOT, AT LEAST I DO NOT THINK IT UNREASONABLE TO SUGGEST THAT, AT A MINIMUM, WE SHOULD CEASE HELPING THE OTHER SIDE BECAUSE WE CANNOT CURB THE PASSION TO BE CREDIBLE TO THE CRITICS.

6. THIS LAST THOUGHT. REF A WAS NOT MEANT AS A "REPROACH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE BUREAU". WE DESPERATELY NEED THE HELP OF THE BUREAU - FAR MORE THAN WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING. IF IT WAS A "REPROACH", WHETHER IT WAS MERITED, OTHERS CAN DECIDE, IF IT COMES TO THAT. REGARDING YOUR LAST ANALOGY, THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE WOULD WELCOME MORE THAN A GOOD COACH WHO COULD DEVELOP AND TRANSMIT TO THE TEAM SOME FORWARD STRATEGY, RATHER THAN RESPONDING WITH PURELY DEFENSIVE TACTICS. AND IT WAS THE ALUMNI, NOT THE PLAYERS, THE COACH TRIED TO KEEP "SURLY BUT NOT MUTINOUS".

IF THE ANALOGY WAS TO PERSUADE US TO BECOME "ALUMNI" NOT  
"PLAYERS" MANY OF US HERE NEED VERY LITTLE MORE PERSUASION.  
THEREFORE, IT MIGHT BE JUST AS WELL TO LEAVE THIS MESSAGE  
UNANSWERED. OTHERWISE, I MIGHT REALLY BE TEMPTED TO ELABORATE  
ON MY FRIEND LEE KWAN YEU'S RECENT OBSERVATION TO BOB  
INGERSOLL THAT THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF VIET-NAM WAS  
IN WASHINGTON, NOT IN VIET-NAM.

7. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE VERY WISE TO INSTRUCT EA/VN THAT  
THE FLIP WILSON COMMENT QUOTED IN REF A WAS TO BE OBSERVED  
AS THE GOVERNING PRECEPT IN THEIR HANDLING OF EMBASSY  
REPORTING. TO QUOTE A FAVORITE PHRASE OF OUR MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE,  
LE DUC THO, THIS MESSAGE IS SENT "WITH SERIOUS INTENT AND  
THE UTMOST GOODWILL". REGARDS.  
MARTIN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PERSONAL OPINION, PROPAGANDA, TREATY SIGNATURE, ARMISTICE, US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PRISONERS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, COMMUNIST FRONT ORGANIZATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 FEB 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974SAIGON02441  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** SAIGON  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740211/aaaaakcz.tel  
**Line Count:** 130  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** : A) SAIGON 2338; B) STATE 036412  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 AUG 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12-Aug-2002 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <14-Aug-2002 by MorefiRH>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** COUNTERING HANOI'S DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE GVN  
**TAGS:** PFOR, VS  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005